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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SPIRITUAL FITNESS: AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE ARMY CHAPLAINCY

BY

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United States Army

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SPIRITUAL FITNESS: AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE ARMY CHAPLAINCY

Ву

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ABSTRACT

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At the foundation of the Chaplain Corps' effectiveness in providing quality religious support has been the spirituality of its chaplains. Given the greatly expanded roles and missions of the Army Chaplaincy during the past twenty-five years, individual chaplains are faltering in their efforts to maintain personal spiritual health. The challenges and uncertainties of ministry in the 21st century will demand a Chaplaincy that is spiritually fit. Chaplains must deliberately make personal spiritual health and fitness a priority.

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PREFACE

The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.

(Proverbs 27:21)

I am grateful to God for His call on my life to serve as an Army chaplain. While every ministry has its tough moments, I cannot imagine that there is a more fulfilling opportunity, nor a more challenging one. Providing for the spiritual needs of the soldiers, family members, and civilians who comprise the United States Army is surely a great privilege and responsibility.

While I am amazed by the collective accomplishments and contributions of the Chaplain Corps toward serving the people of our Army, I must confess that I am dissatisfied with my own efforts to grow spiritually. I say this not as a means of sounding falsely humble, but because it is true. In my discussions with many chaplains throughout our Corps, I find I am not alone.

This paper represents my search toward remedying this problem. Not surprisingly, my efforts have carried me back to the cross of Christ. Jesus won victory for mankind at the cross. He conquered death, hell, and the grave. He purchased my salvation. He called me to ministry, and it is He who equips me for the difficult challenges of being an Army chaplain. I have failed Him, but not once has He ever failed me.

Many times I wondered how I would ever do what the Lord seemed to place in my path. I am sure that many of my fellow chaplains can identify. And yet, somehow the challenges were handled and people's needs met. Not by me, but by Him.

Down deep I have always known this, but somehow I often manage to lose perspective as new challenges arise. Why? Essentially I believe it is a pride issue. The Army stresses the need for leaders to take charge and get things done. As one of

the Army's leaders, I do. And as frequently occurs, the Army is not slow to acknowledge and reward success. I have been richly blessed in these terms, but unfortunately also foolish enough at times to believe I was somehow worthy of the praise I would receive. And that is a bad mistake.

The Lord does want us to take charge and solve problems, but never without His help and guidance. Like many of my fellow chaplains, I desire to commit myself anew to serving God with my whole heart. There is important ministry to be done. I want to be spiritually fit for whatever God calls me to do.

I realize that a deeper commitment to serve God carries with it a cost. The cost means surrender. The cost means denying self. The cost means following Jesus and not looking back. Toward that end, the Lord has impressed upon me my need to make personal spiritual growth top priority in my life. If I will do that, I will please Him and be more effective in my service to others.

I pray that my fellow chaplains desire to do the same. Together with God, we can continue as useful servants in Kingdom work.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS: AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE ARMY CHAPLAINCY

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction... But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

(2 Tim 4:1,2,5 NIV)

At the foundation of the chaplaincy's effectiveness in providing religious support that is both timely and relevant has been the spirituality of its chaplains. Former Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Patrick Hessian issued these words of guidance and encouragement to the Chaplaincy in the fall of 1982:

Personal, spiritual health is at least as important for chaplains as training and tactics is for the tactical officer. Each chaplain is responsible for his/her spiritual well-being and must seek opportunities for theological reading, study, and reflection. Chaplains are encouraged to maintain close relationships to their endorsing denomination and seek to grow theologically and spiritually through the nurture of their religious organizations.¹

Chaplain Hessian's words, as well as similar statements issued by succeeding Chiefs of Chaplains, remain valid as the 21st century approaches. If the Chaplaincy is to provide the religious support needed for the Army of the next century, chaplains must deliberately make personal spiritual health and

fitness a priority. This is the thesis and the imperative message of this paper.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This paper has four major divisions. After demonstrating the historical significance of spiritual fitness for Army chaplains, A Spiritual Herritage identifies the rationale for assessing the importance of spiritual fitness for the Army Chaplaincy of the future. Spiritual Fitness: Essential For Spiritual Leadership defines two key terms, spiritual leadership and spiritual fitness, and then discusses spiritual fitness as a vital component of spiritual leadership. The illustrations and examples are drawn from Christian scripture and tradition, reflecting the author's own faith posture. It is not the author's intent to exclude other faith groups, but rather to examine the question of spiritual fitness from the perspective of the faith the author knows best and which the majority of Army chaplains represent.

Ministry During The Past Twenty-Five Years provides a brief historical review of the Chaplaincy during the last twenty-five years, showing how the roles and missions of the Chaplain Corps have greatly expanded to meet the Army's needs Lessons Learned:

Implications For Spiritual Fitness, while affirming the positive contributions of the Chaplaincy, cites clearly negative trends pertaining to declining spiritual fitness among those serving as

the Army's religious leaders. The paper concludes with a strong call to incorporate spiritual fitness as the cardinal azimuth for the future vision of the Chaplaincy.

A SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

(2 Corinthians 4:7-10)

The existence of chaplains in the United States Army is as old the nation itself. Since 1775, chaplains have been religious leaders charged with the responsibility of assisting soldiers, family members, and authorized civilians to practice their faith of choice as provided under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Chaplains have performed their mission well, providing religious support to Americans from a multitude of faith groups across a spectrum that ranges from times of peace to this nation's participation in two World Wars.

Given the successful history of the Army chaplaincy in providing for the spiritual needs of soldiers for the past 200 years, one could fairly ask the question, "Why this paper? Isn't that what chaplains have always done? What's new?"

These are legitimate questions. The Army chaplaincy has a splendid history of providing quality religious support to the men and women who serve in uniform. Military historical records are replete with proof of the many ways that chaplains have provided spiritual guidance, encouragement, compassion, and hope to military people.

There are at least three compelling reasons. Preeminent among these is the sacredness of the calling. As men and women called by God, chaplains bear the sacred responsibility to "bring God to soldiers and soldiers to God." This demands quality spiritual leadership, the kind soldiers will follow. It is imperative that chaplains make to effort to continuously evaluate their ministry in light of the calling that God has placed upon them. This is very much a private and personal undertaking, but one that takes spiritual discipline - time spent in activities like reading God's word, prayer, meditation, and worship.

Secondly, like all professional Army leaders, chaplains cannot assume that past accomplishments automatically translate to success for the future. They bear the responsibility to evaluate performance of duty and to seek improvement. As the 21st century approaches, every branch of the Army is busily engaged in assessing both its future requirements and the capabilities necessary to meet those requirements. The Army Chaplaincy can be no different.

Finally, over the last several years there has been growing evidence of wear and tear within the chaplain ranks. As chaplains have become increasingly involved in many new areas of service, the impact of these additional responsibilities has begun to show its effect. Added to this has been the marked increase in the operations tempo across most of the Army, especially with regard to the number and frequency of deployments. To say the least, the Army and its chaplains have been busy - very busy.

The question isn't whether or not chaplains have provided religious support across a wide spectrum of needs. They have, and perhaps more effectively than during any comparable peacetime period in our nation's history. But is the present pace sustainable? What, if any, are the negative consequences? How are the Army's clergymen and clergywomen doing toward maintaining their spiritual health and vitality? Is the Chaplain Corps spiritually fit?

Although not a pleasant outcome to consider, the negative repercussions of a Chaplain Corps losing its spiritual edge could be devastating. The losers are not only the chaplains themselves, but the wonderful soldiers, family members, and civilians whom they serve. On a larger scale, it could be the entire nation that suffers, for this country must remain spiritually and morally strong if it is to retain its position as the earth's leading democracy. And to go one step further, it may be the entire world that is adversely affected if the United States were to fall from

it preeminent position as a global superpower, a superpower committed to the ideals of freedom and justice for all nations and peoples.

At a time with unparalleled peacetime challenges and threats as the 21st century approaches, collectively the chaplaincy must address this issue directly. The core competency of the Chaplain Corps has always been the spirituality of its chaplains.

Spiritual leadership is desperately needed. There can be no substitute. Good intentions are not enough. Chaplains must be spiritually fit.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS: ESSENTIAL FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

(2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV)

Chaplains are to be spiritual leaders for the soldiers, family members, and civilians who comprise the military community. For those who have served as military chaplains, the enormity of the challenge is well known. While it is not the purpose of this paper to compare the military chaplaincy with any other form of ministry, it seems fair to say that the challenges are unique.

Through the years, ministry to soldiers in combat has come to be the primary reason for clergy in uniform. Ministry to troops in combat has continued as a fundamental reason for military chaplains.²

The history of the Chaplaincy is rooted in the belief that a chaplain's primary role is to provide ministry to soldiers in combat. Our nation's past has provided many opportunities for chaplains to practice this ministry. Since the time of the American Revolution until now, chaplains have always accompanied soldiers into harm's way, providing the spiritual leadership, support, and guidance so desperately needed during the stressful conditions of combat. As past experience has shown, ministry to soldiers in combat ranks among the most challenging of all ministry tasks and necessitates that chaplains train diligently in their development as spiritual leaders.

At the risk of stating what appears to be obvious, it is essential to examine briefly the relationship between *spiritual leadership* and *spiritual fitness*. But first, what is spiritual leadership? Spiritual leadership is more easily described than defined. It is a blend of natural and spiritual qualities. Spiritual leaders combine both, with the recognition that even so-called natural abilities are God-given and are most effective in service for God.³

While chaplains may possess so-called innate leadership qualities or traits, spiritual leadership ultimately is a matter of spiritual power. It comes from God. There can be no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader. Chaplains are dependent upon the Spirit working through them.

If it seems obvious that effective spiritual leadership necessitates possessing the requisite spiritual characteristics or traits which qualify that individual to lead others in spiritual matters, determining what it means to be spiritually fit is not. As in defining spiritual leadership, assigning a specific meaning to the term spiritual fitness is not easy, especially in a manner that will have application across the multitude of Christian faith groups represented in the Army chaplaincy. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-63-12, SPIRITUAL FITNESS, provides the following definition:

Spiritual fitness is the development of those personal qualities needed to sustain a soldier in times of danger, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, and human values; and they form the basis of character, decision-making, and integrity.⁴

Given that this definition of spiritual fitness applies to soldiers across the Army, its implication for chaplains seems clear. Chaplains must maintain personal spiritual fitness at a level that will not only sustain them personally for the exigencies of military life, but also enable them to provide for the spiritual needs of those whom they serve.

For chaplains, the term *spiritual fitness* needs to encompass a sharper focus. First, what is the source for spiritual fitness? Secondly, what is the relationship between spiritual leadership and spiritual fitness?

While it would be presumptuous to provide a concise definition of spiritual fitness or spirituality that will completely satisfy the myriad of faith groups represented in the Army Chaplaincy, it seems reasonable to state that Christian chaplains derive spirituality through their religion. For Christians, the essence of spirituality refers to a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16, almost certainly the most widely read and quoted verse in the Bible, states the Christian message in concise terms:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16 NIV)

Edward C. Sellner, a Catholic scholar and author of numerous books and articles on spirituality, captures beautifully how a relationship with Jesus Christ impacts one's perspective on life:

Spirituality is influenced for the Christian in a most significant way by the person and ministry of Jesus: the Sacred Scriptures, which tell his story; and the life of the ongoing community that bears his name. Through Jesus we have been given an awareness that our time on this earth is sacred, that we share a sacred journey, that our God has entered human history and taken on a human face. Christian spirituality includes the many ways throughout history that Christian individuals and communities have responded and continue to respond to the awareness of God's transforming love. ⁵

The very nature of the military chaplaincy differs from many other kinds of ministry. Rather than representing God primarily as part of the local church, chaplains live and work in a secular

world. They frequently work, exercise, eat, and sleep in the same environment as those to whom they minister. It is in this context that chaplains bear the privilege, and yet responsibility, to represent God to the many thousands associated with the military. Unquestionably, this witness begins through a personal example which is credible. Once achieved, this credibility unlocks many doors to minister God's love and strength to some of the most wonderful people on earth.

But it comes with a cost. Spiritual leadership is demanded. Spiritual leadership is not possible without genuine spirituality, or spiritual fitness. And spiritual fitness is not something given from birth, nor is it a product of rank or military experience. It comes from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It comes to those who seek the Lord with a whole heart and who do not allow the exigencies of life to hinder or stop the search.

MINISTRY DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

(2 Corinthians 4:16,17)

Since 1973 the Chaplain Corps has greatly expanded its ministry outreach through a variety of programs and activities. These efforts have not only contributed to the readiness of the

force, but have also enhanced quality of life for soldiers, family members, and civilians.

While this paper is not a history of the Chaplaincy, it is important to consider the context in which the Chaplaincy began the evolution that has resulted in the Corps which exists at present. The early 1970's were troubled years for the United States Army. Among many others, three factors contributed most heavily to this situation. First, by 1975 consensus among Americans was that the United States had lost the war in Vietnam. Years of fighting, millions of dollars, and thousands of American casualties would not achieve a lasting security for the Republic of South Vietnam.

Secondly, and related to the first, was the declining popularity of the military. Failure to secure victory in Vietnam along with several highly publicized negative events associated with the war fueled the fires of discontent with the military establishment. For one of the few times in U.S. history, the American public's trust in the military and its leadership had eroded badly.

Thirdly, during reassessment of U.S. strategic policy, both military and civilian leaders concluded that America's capacity to repel or deter aggression anywhere in the world had become crippled by the military's preoccupation with Southeast Asia. New priorities mandated a different allocation of America's military resources. The Soviet Union loomed on the horizon as a major

threat to U.S. interests. In what represented a major shift in focus, the United States had to take immediate measures to deter or repel possible Soviet aggression aimed at Europe and the members of the NATO alliance.

In short, the climate within the U.S. Army was one of defeat and crisis - defeat in failing to secure victory in Vietnam, and crisis as Army leaders attempted to pick up the pieces and resurrect a force capable of functioning in an uncertain and threatening future. In the midst of this crisis of the Army's spirit, General Craighton Abrams made an important decision to focus on the professionalization and ethical base of the Army. He asked the Chief of Chaplains to take a leading role in this effort.

The expanse in the chaplaincy's involvement across the Army began during these difficult circumstances. Chaplain (Major General) Gerhardt W. Hyatt became the Army's thirteenth Chief of Chaplains on 3 August 1971 and shouldered the enormous responsibility of leading the Chaplaincy during four of the Army's most difficult years.

Chaplain Hyatt's four-year term as leader of the Chaplaincy paralleled a period of unprecedented turbulence and unrest in the Army and in the nation. The country, the churches, and society in general found themselves in a crucible of changing values, conflicting ideologies and the apparent disintegration of many traditional values in American life.

As the result of Chaplain Hyatt's leadership, knowledge of the Army system, influence with top Army leaders, managerial skills, and vision for the Chaplaincy's role toward assisting the Army in addressing a host of serious problems, the demand for chaplain ministry became overwhelming. During the period from 1971-1975, the Chaplaincy emerged as a major contributor toward helping the Army to get on its feet following the turmoil of the 1960's to include the unpopular Vietnam War. The following quote provides a brief description of how the Chaplaincy responded.

At the conclusion of the Vietnam Conflict, in 1973-1975, when the Army turned its attention to the professionalization and modernization of its forces, the Chaplain Corps responded with more than 48 programs administered from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains through the major agencies and commands to assist with those overall Army objectives. Many of these programs -Personal Effectiveness Training, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention, Family Life Centers, Instruction in Ethics and Moral Leadership, Organizational Effectiveness, and Seminars in Overcoming Racism and Sexism directly addressed the needs of Army soldiers and family members and contributed not only to the professionalism of the of Excellence but also translated strengthening the readiness and cohesion of the force.7

The momentum for the expansion of the Chaplaincy's role which began during Chaplain Hyatt's tenure as Chief of Chaplains has continued up to the present. In the years following, the Chaplain Corps has had six Chiefs, each with his own unique vision, pastoral skills, and leadership style. Under the collective leadership abilities and talents of these godly leaders, the Army Chaplaincy has served the needs of military men and women, family members, and civilians in extraordinary ways.

Several dominant themes emerged as the underlying rationale for the Chaplaincy's growing influence during the last quarter of the 20th century. The initial catalyst was the need to assist the Army in its efforts to professionalize and modernize toward meeting the Soviet threat. Within the human dimension the chaplaincy addressed many of the difficult issues which were not only prevalent within the military, but also troublesome for American society at large. Drug abuse, racial tensions, decline in traditional values, crumbling family ties, rising suicide rates, and the challenging demands of an increasingly pluralistic military population constituted but a few of the major areas of focus.

Secondly, and simultaneous with the Army's revision of battlefield doctrine, the Chaplaincy developed the doctrine of Forward Thrust. Initiated during the tenure of Chaplain (Major General) Orris E. Kelly, the intent was to assign chaplains directly to battalion level as a means of fostering more direct ministry with soldiers. The positive impacts of this decision have carried forward to the present. Commanders have grown accustomed to seeing their chaplains present and engaged in virtually every activity involving soldiers and family members. Noticeably, chaplains increasingly began to assume leadership roles in activities that were not primarily religious in nature. Commanders recognized that in chaplains they had staff officers

who were not only highly educated, but also adaptive toward performing tasks requiring good people skills.

Thirdly, and closely aligned with Forward Thrust doctrine, has been increasing emphasis upon the ministry of presence. While not a doctrinal term, its unofficial meaning has had the effect of doctrine. The essence of its meaning characterizes a ministry style by which chaplains travel out into all places where soldiers work and live. Stated simply, instead of waiting for soldiers to visit the chapel, it is a way to take the chapel to soldiers. At a time when the practice of formalized religion has diminished not only within the military but also throughout society as a whole, ministry of presence has served as an effective means for chaplains to have meaningful contact with their constituency, soldiers and family members. The practice of the ministry of presence has been so effective that commanders and soldiers not only appreciate it, but also have come to expect it.

A fourth theme has been the emphasis on battle-focused ministry. With the development of the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, Unit Ministry Teams began participating in this training in 1985. Two other combat training centers emerged shortly thereafter, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) at Hohenfels, Germany.

Experiences at all three combat maneuver training centers have not only provided rigorous and realistic training opportunities for Unit Ministry Teams, but have given chaplains unique opportunities for ministry. Across the Chaplaincy, chaplains have come to realize that the hardships of deployment and combat create an environment of openness for ministry that is unmatched. These training experiences have not only taught chaplains the value of being at the right place at the right time, but have also reinforced the fact that moving effectively and safely around the battlefield requires considerable tactical knowledge, staff skills, and training.

Finally, the increasing importance and effectiveness of the Chaplaincy's role has been validated through the crucible of real world experiences.

During the period from 1975 through 1995, the United States Army deployed more than a half a million soldiers around the world on combat, peacekeeping, and humanitarian and peace enforcement missions. As of June 30, 1995 there were 108,000 U.S. soldiers deployed in 39 countries to include 25 soldiers in Antarctica.

The pace of deployments since 1995 has not lessened, a fact most notably evident with the requirement for military operations in former Yugoslavia which are still ongoing at the present time. The outlook for the future is not likely to change. The United States remains engaged on a global scale. Chaplains will continue to be important players in not only taking care of soldiers who

are deployed, but in ministering to family members remaining at home station.

The last twenty-five years have witnessed enormous changes within the Chaplaincy which have resulted in greater service to the Army. In addition to the more traditional role of providing religious support, chaplains have demonstrated a wide diversity of skills and abilities in areas far beyond the conventional borders of pastoral ministry. Without question, the work of the Chaplaincy has been enormous in scope, powerful in effect, and relevant to the needs of the Army.

LESSONS LEARNED: IMPLICATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

(2 Corinthians 3:5,6)

The Chaplaincy has served the Army well during the past twenty-five years. This is a matter of indisputable fact. But the Chaplain Corps' superb contributions have not come without cost, a cost that for the most part has gone unnoticed by most of the Army, even some chaplains.

What is that cost? The cost has been the degradation of personal spiritual fitness in the Army's chaplains. While there is not a body of empirical evidence to prove this, the negative

impact on spiritual fitness is apparent by examining two major trends that have evolved during the past few years. The identification of these trends is not the result of criticism from an individual or group outside the chaplaincy that neither understands neither the chaplaincy mission nor appreciates the unique challenges of military ministry. Rather, it is an honest effort by the author to report objectively on the basis of long association with the Army Chaplaincy and many who have served as chaplains.

First, personal spiritual fitness has ceased to be a high priority for many chaplains. Given the Army's ever increasing array of needs, the Chaplaincy has expanded its roles and missions in an attempt to meet those requirements. For individual chaplains, this has translated into a bigger portfolio of duties and responsibilities. Often, the result has been that chaplains simply feel overwhelmed by the demands of their ministry and do not feel they can take the time to practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading and study, meditation, sermon preparation, and so forth. Over the past several years it is probably accurate to state that the average chaplain has devoted insufficient time to maintaining personal spiritual fitness. Too many other demands seem to scream for immediate attention.

A second and more dangerous trend among chaplains is an ever-increasing blindness to the need to be spiritually fit.

While there are several contributing factors to this trend, a major reason is that success within the Chaplaincy doesn't necessarily demand spiritual fitness as a requisite quality. A chaplain who is a good staff officer with adequate interpersonal skills tends to be well rewarded within the military system. Spirituality may be sadly lacking.

While it could be argued that this is not a new phenomenon in an institutional ministry like the Army, the potential negative consequences with respect to spiritual leadership and fitness are too important to ignore. As spiritual health and vitality diminish, so do one's awareness and sensitivity to spiritual matters in general. If chaplains can seemingly accomplish their day-to-day ministry through reliance on their abilities as a staff officer, the need to depend upon spiritual power becomes less apparent. This kind of behavior frequently becomes self-perpetuating. And why not? The system tells them they are succeeding. Yet Scripture provides a clear warning for those who neglect their spiritual development.

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

(Rev 3:15-18 NIV)

A simple fact of human nature is the fact that people do not act unless they perceive a need. This truth applies in the spiritual realm as well. Yet within the Chaplaincy, the need to be a strong, active spiritual leader can arise quite suddenly in a crisis with little or no warning. Failure to be prepared is not an option, as the following vignette from Bosnia illustrates:

As soldiers worked non-stop to establish base camp locations throughout the Multi National Division(North) (MND-N) sector, harsh weather conditions multiplied the difficulty. The scale of the task itself was enormous. The ever-present threat of land mines combined with the cruel Bosnia winter combined to make the job a daunting one. For chaplains who were spiritually prepared, it was a chance to make an impact.

Chaplain (Captain) Dan Wackerhagen moved to minister to the most seriously injured soldier, Staff Sergeant Watson of the 94th Engineers. Sergeant Watson had been near the tower when it collapsed on top of him, striking him in the head, shoulders, and back. The tower was so heavy that it took four soldiers to lift it off of him.

The medical evacuation team had just arrived and was making its assessment. Sergeant Watson was not a pretty sight. In addition to coughing up blood, he was bleeding heavily from the upper skull area, nose, and left ear. The likelihood of multiple fractures and internal bleeding in the chest cavity seemed high. Paralysis in one or more limbs was certainly possible.

A cold, biting wind made the assessment all the more difficult, and painful. The medics tried to be as gentle as they could, but the process still appeared brutal. In life and death situations, the medics cannot afford to allow pain to slow their work. Sergeant Watson was in obvious agony, screaming the entire time and even louder as they started an intravenous injection to keep him from going into shock.

For those not accustomed to emergency first aid, it was unsettling to say the least. I turned and watched numerous soldiers grimace as they listened to the screams. Most chose to walk away. With all of the

other trauma surrounding the accident, it was more than they could endure.

But, then, God intervened in a special way. As the medical personnel were preparing to carry Sergeant Watson to the helicopter, Chaplain Wackerhagen obtained permission to pray with the patient. He knelt over Sergeant Watson and quietly prayed words of comfort and reassurance. It was a short prayer, but a powerful one. Staff Sergeant Watson responded immediately. He stopped screaming and the expression on his face changed from one of pain and agony to one of comfort and serenity. He knew God's presence was there with him in the midst of his pain and confusion. For Sergeant Watson, the man of God had come at just the right moment.

Although this accident happened with no notice, Chaplain Wackerhagen had been spiritually prepared. He ministered God's healing grace in a most wonderful manner to a soldier in great need. It was a most powerful demonstration of God working through an Army chaplain. Thankfully, weeks later we later received news that Sergeant Watson made a complete recovery.

In summary, the imperative for spiritual fitness in the Army Chaplaincy deserves strong attention for at least three important reasons. First, the challenges and uncertainties of ministry in the 21st century will demand a Chaplaincy that is spiritually fit. The Army will desperately need spiritual leaders who are genuinely men and women of God who bring spiritual power to effect lives and circumstances. Secondly, the development of a strong Chaplaincy is dependent on good spiritual leadership by chaplains who supervise, train, and mentor subordinate chaplains. Finally, and most importantly, God will not be glorified by ministry which is done apart from the spiritual power which only He can provide, but He will and does reward those who seek Him.

Word Count 5038

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